

Archives

# *i magazine*



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## Poetic Capital /s...

I just completed a little project, just a little something,  
to let me know my values, the ones that I hold above all others.  
As it turns out, they were "wisdom", "knowledge", and "creativity".  
I think that's fairly appropriate, as I stare into the emotional mirror.

What is the poet without wisdom? A fraud, for the most part, I think.  
Quite possibly, it is the poet's most valuable tool, for it teaches him of what to write about.  
The dark, the dank, the low-down, and filthy issues of the soul not discussed at dinner parties.  
Wisdom lets the writer know that these grime topics are important. Love, hate, hope, sorrow, etc.


Knowledge is the seeking of truth, and who can afford to live with too many lies?  
I mean, you need a thirst for knowledge. A desire to reach out and touch. Experience.  
What you gain from knowledge is converted into wisdom a lot of the times.  
Does not knowledge of the human mind and spirit convert into insight into them?

Of course, without creativity the poet is sunk.  
If he cannot correctly put his thoughts into some medium, he risks drowning in his wisdom.  
He should not need to, or want to, or have to keep all that knowledge to himself.  
It is the writers', artists', musicians', and dancers' charge to share.

Yeah, that simple exercise was pretty accurate.

—R.L. McMaster





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• i magazine  
1997

Spring

**The literary magazine of Mount Wachusett Community College**



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Serendipity

*I take it with me everywhere  
This ritual  
Of instant replay  
Knowing that  
It doesn't serve me to any good end  
Except for momentary hope  
And a quick release.*

*~Teresa M. Diederich*



The fearful path

*I  
feel them pulling me  
an invisible magnet  
it's as strong as God's voice  
but for now i  
Deny  
one day  
My  
path will bring me to them  
Roots.*

*~t.c. bean*

Freedom

*Freedom is my most endearing quality.  
I would lay down all caution,  
and walk naked in the face of peril,  
if my freedom were infringed upon.*

*For freedom is a clear, brisk night  
where creatures roam and hunt  
under the dim light of the stars overhead, and  
freedom is a single flower  
stealing my eyes for capture of bloom.*

*I dare the strongest man alive  
to try and rape my independence.  
I challenge the most adept intelligence  
to reach for my will.  
For I would fight like a knight,  
and conquer my opposition,  
or die for the freedom,  
in which is beheld unto me.*

*~Kenneth Bernier*

Need a Little Understanding

don't know where I belong  
the sun sets in the west  
no place to rest my bones  
sleep all day  
drifting all night

home is where the heart is  
where is it if there is no heart  
it's been broken,  
stolen, sold to pay for  
a place to sleep

song stuck in my head  
can't get it out  
looking for something to lose it  
been searching for so long

if I take the easy way out  
will you be there waiting  
or will you turn me away?

~Cora Cleveland

ITS A SOCIAL DISEASE THIS THING CALLED  
LIFE

A PASSIVE INTERPLAY OF CYCLES PROFOUND.  
WHO TOUCHES WHOM, A FUNDAMENTAL PROCESS  
DIVINE.

OF REARING AND INDEPENDENCE  
BEING AND NOT BEING  
CHASE AND ACQUISITION  
A SUBTLE TWIST IN EVOLUTION.

PAUSE.

OF LOVE AND NURTURE  
TRUST AND ASSURANCE  
GREGARIOUSNESS AND ISOLATION  
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
BELIEF  
AND

FAITH.

PAUSE

WHAT SLIGHT OF HOLY HAND  
VISITS HERE,  
WITHOUT QUESTION THE FIRST AND LAST DRAWN BREATH  
PREORDAINED.

AH LIFE,  
PAUSE FOR ME...

~SHEALAGH O'SHEA





*Gone*  
by G. Gilman Keith V

*All that autumn I waited for her. Among the falling, coloured leaves of the chilly season, I waited. The reds, the yellows, the browns all would look terribly breathtaking to me now, were her face not swimming around in my mind. She has been gone from me since the end of September and it is now almost the end of October and I sit and wait.*

*Laura left me without saying good-bye. As much as I loved her, I miss her more now and I'd do anything to have her back. I sit here now on these stone steps of this almost ancient building and stare out across her refuge. I hug my knees closer to me and I think. I think of the times that she and I had together. But all of that is over now. All I have left are the memories of our times together. The thoughts of our love.*

*We had done many things together, she and I. It's almost funny how selective a memory can be. I don't remember a lot of things about her, but there are many things that I do remember. Of all the things that we had done in our short time together the thing that seems to almost personify our love took place a few short months before. The summer was in its waning days and the days were exceptionally hot. We both lived in the northwest corner of Connecticut and neither one of us went to the ocean much. I remember the day that she decided that she wanted to go to the ocean. The day was sweltering and nothing seemed to help cool us down.*

*We both sat beneath the gigantic oak tree in my backyard. I sat on the grass, my back leaning against the rough bark of the tree, reading a book. (It was something by Fitzgerald, 'This Side of Paradise' if I'm not mistaken.) She lay on the grass next to me, her arms folded beneath her head acting as a pillow. Her eyes were fixed on the considerable expanse of green that was the tree's leaves. Occasionally, my eyes would drift from the pages and steal a glance at her beauty. She was an island of beauty, drifting on a sea of grass. She was beautiful, her big, brown eyes stared fixedly towards the sky. A smile slowly spread across my face and I turned my attention back to the pages of the book.*

*It was then that she proposed going on the trip. She moved her arms from beneath her head and used them to raise her body up to a sitting position. Stray bit of grass seemed trapped in her gorgeous, dark brown hair. I gently reached over and brushed them away. She turned her head to look into my eyes, beads of sweat threatened to run into her eyes. I wiped the warm dampness from her brow, she smiled.*

*'We need to get out of this town for a little while. What do you say we head to the beach?' I could feel brown eyes burning deep into my soul. 'I want to see the ocean at least once before the end of summer. We'll make it our little tradition.' All I could do was nod my head, I was helpless against her charm.*

*A few hours later, we arrived at the beach. Laura barely waited for the car to stop before she kicked open the door and ran off towards the beach. She ran ahead to the sand, dropping her towel on her way to the cool, invigorating water of Long Island Sound. I walked slowly behind her as she ran, stopping only once before the sand to remove my shoes. The sand felt great as it slid between my toes, as I walked, slightly scorching the soles of my feet. I felt the hot August sun on my shoulders as I headed towards her discarded towel. I smiled as I watched her splashing in the water and I listened to her laughter as she used her hands as a scoop and threw water above her head.*

*After I had shed my t-shirt and laid both of our towels on the sand, I ran to the water to join her. I raced to the water and lept in beside her, sending water splashing in every direction. Laura squealed with joy. We swam in the ocean's water for a little while longer, until the sun started to make its descent towards the horizon. Laura ran from the water, just as fast as she had run into it. She ran to the towel I had laid out for her.*



*My fingertips had pulled back into wrinkled flesh. But, I still couldn't bring myself to leave the water. I felt new. It felt as if the water was cleansing my body. I would have stayed in the water for the rest of the night had Laura not called to me from the sand.*

*"The sun's setting!" she yelled as I floated on my back, my eyes turned towards the heavens. "Come watch it with me." I let my feet sink down to the sandy bottom of the ocean floor and I slowly raised myself to my feet. I looked towards her. For one second I was frozen, captivated by her stunning beauty. She smiled at me and waved her hand at me to come closer. I ran from the water, towards my love.*

*I sat on my towel, letting my body dry in the now chilling early evening air. Laura sat herself between my legs and lay her head back to my chest. I wrapped my arms around her and held her tight. As tight as I could without squeezing the life out of her. We watched the sunset together that evening, like we had many other nights before, but this time it was different. The colours the sun made as it slid behind the edge of the world were amazing, they took my breath away. I slowly pulled Laura closer to me, and with a faint breath, whispered, "I love you."*

*As I look back on it now, the colours of the sun that I saw that day are the same ones I see before me now, in the leaves. A cold wind is blowing those leaves closer to me now, taunting me with my loss. I want to get up and run from them, but I can't. I realize now, as my eyes scan through the rough terrain, that is Laura's home now, I must face my fears. Besides a walk through Laura's home doesn't seem so painful anymore, I can hesitate no longer. Another cold wind chills my bones as I stand up to shake the temporary paralysis from my legs. My vision is becoming distorted by the tears falling from my eyes, but I must press on. I wish Laura were here now to hold me tight and make everything feel better. I slowly walk down the dirt road, that surrounded Laura's home, kicking rocks as I go.*

*Slowly, I approach the place where Laura is. My spine shivers... I have not been here since she was put here. I was too afraid. I am not afraid any longer. Laura left me a month ago, because of something her father did to her. Laura's father was a sickening man and now... he's gone to. I visited him before coming to Laura's side.*

*I've come to Laura's home to say hello. To say hold on, baby I'll be there soon. I can hear cars coming up the dirt road directly behind me. I knew that they would come. If I'm going to do it... I must do it now. Reaching into the front pocket of my thin, cobalt blue windbreaker I pull out a pistol. It's polished and black. I took it from my father's bedside stand. It took Laura's father and now, it will take me too.*

*I hear the cars coming behind me slowly come to a halt. I have to do it now or the chance will be lost. I can now hear the footsteps coming from behind me. I drop to my knees in front of her home. I lower my head in a small prayer...'forgive me, God...' I can hear the footsteps start to pick up speed behind me. Quickly, I raise my head and jam the pistol into my mouth. In the split second before I pull the trigger I taste the bitter, burnt taste of the ignited gun powder in the barrel. The footsteps are too late, because in one split second, I am with my love. I am... gone...*





## Dance

*Love is a hard word to define, although I have tried. I felt If I had some definition, I could compare it to my relationships. It would serve me as an identification chart. Analyzing it, I could immediately know if I had found love or not. Taking what I have observed and experienced, I sought to define love through questions. Never did it occur to me that gathering answers would be such an arduous assignment. Confused by the information, I hoped age and wisdom would offer a better understanding. As I grew older however, I found only more questions and confusion. My experience can only compare love to the wind, and the answers I seek to windswept leaves I chase, seldom catching.*

*I have observed love as a long complicated journey. Other times, as a smooth easy path, no bumps, rocks, roots or brush to obscure both way, and view. I have walked happily down both paths in my life and wondered, did both paths lead to the same place? Examining a leaf, I saw that each side had its own color and texture, yet top and bottom shared a common shape.*

*I once believed love was something I must find to have. I devoted time and energy to searching and expecting; finding only love cannot be hunted, or taken. Like the delicate, dry, brown autumn leaf that crumbles at the touch of a hand that knows no gentleness.*

*I also thought once two people found love it would keep them beside each other. The pain of reality taught me, two people can be in love, and not belong together. I should have known it took more than just love to survive, when I have witnessed leaves that had died, still on the tree.*

*Is answering my questions understanding the nature of love? Is defining love capturing it? Is love really like the wind, wild and free? For me the answer is, Yes. I say it must be free to move and breath, unburdened. Unfettered to fill sails and lift eagles in the same breath. Is the secret within me? Does chasing wind tossed leaves make me a victim of the wind also? Maybe, I should try to be like a Kite. Colorful and strong, beautiful, yet able to withstand the unpredictable. Above all, love needs respect. Caress the wind, do not try to hold, harness, or capture it. After all, what is string, cloth, and sticks, compared to the force of the winds? Realize that its essence is found in movement, and I can only feel it if it is. All I can do is turn towards love. Be warmed by its friction as it flows over and around me. Celebrate, hold out my arms, let it lift me in one billowing breath. And with all my color and beauty and strength. Dance.*



A QUESTION OF TRUTH

Why do you ask me?

Can't you see?

What exactly it is

You want me to be?

Is it because my life eludes you?

Or is it because it include you?

I am not keeping you here

If you don't want to stay.

I just don't understand...

I only told you I'm Gay.

~AnnMarie St. Cyr

Innocent and Female

Innocent and female,

so, you lock me in a cage.

Innocent and female,

which is why I feel such rage,  
when you push me in the corner,

the sunlight can't shine on my face,  
when you push me down

and rape me

i cannot shine.

I do not like it when others speak for me.

I do not enjoy hearing what they say.

I do not dictate to others,

so, please, don't stand in my path as I try to veer out of yours.

Don't lock me up to protect me,-- I choose to be free

Do not chain my belongings within concrete walls,

I'll be wanting to take some with me,  
as you hold me back

and tell me, "no."

I will decide to go forward

alone,

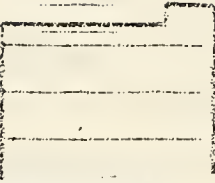
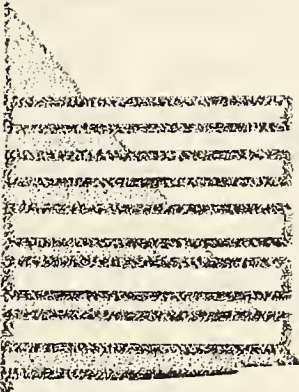
empty - handed,

but so full of life.

~ Lisa Klaud

Do not allow yourself to waste away, for we are to live before we decay.





### City Scape

*Buildings all standing up straight and tall,  
No corner stores, they're all in the mall.  
You live in a complex, no more neighborhoods,  
If you don't have alarms, well maybe you should.  
Your neighbors are strangers, you don't know their name,  
And no one will notice who went or who came.  
The parks close at eight, no night games of ball,  
The muggers and addicts have ruined it all.  
You don't speak to strangers, you don't offer aid,  
For kindness can lead to a price being paid.  
Flowers in boxes, tattered and spent,  
Trees are surrounded by blocks of cement.  
No hills for the sledders, no skates on a creek.  
You drive to the rink through snow-clogged streets.  
Bird songs and breezes are no longer heard,  
It's sirens and car horns and loud spoken words.  
Life just goes on, but it's such a pity  
That some of us have to live in the city.*

*Jeanne Hue*

A boy of about 12 years of age sits in the woods by himself. He is alone, on a rock with many curves and sharp edges. As he sits, a small stream flows in front of him, with the water glistening in the sun barely shining through the trees. Across the stream, is the future. The future, with bright metal machinery, that has no voice or feeling. This little boy must decide.

A bird flies by and slowly lands on the rock with the boy. With his head held in his hands, he is crying at the sight he sees across the stream. He knows at sometime he will have to go over there. He will have to face the change of scenery and the change of life-style. He knows the forest will soon be no more, and buildings will take its place. No more camping with his family. No more hiking with his dad. There is a weight on his shoulders and a voice in his head. One says to leave and join the new excitement. The other says, stay, protect the dying breed of wildlife. The boy's head is exploding with rage and indecision. There is no choice, and he knows that sooner or later, he'll be forced to the other side. His thoughts are uncontrollable and sad:

There is no love across the stream,  
and very little happiness.  
I see people sit alone at machines,  
and then go home and call it a workday.  
Soon I will be at that point,  
in my school and at my home.  
No one will talk of feelings,  
or even talk at all.  
Why must I leave this place,  
filled with peacefulness,  
and joy?  
Why will I understand no one,  
and be alone until we're destroyed?

These thoughts and many more ran through his mind as tears flowed down his cheeks. Can I leave this world and ever even adapt to the new one? he thought.

As he sat alone in his own world of nature, he noticed something very strange. The stream he had so much loved was beginning to collect a strange residue. It and the forest was being polluted. Animals were running away from him as he stood to have a closer look. The sky was slowly becoming smoggy and he had not even seen it. The water was darkening while a tree fell in the distance. The boy looked up and said, "I guess there is no choice anymore."

-Jonathan Basset



When I first opened my eyes this morning,  
I looked out the window,  
And saw it snowing away just as it still is now,  
I love the snow it feels so soft,  
But yet so cold,  
It has its magical like appearance,  
That amazes all,  
It glitters like mica rock,  
And melts in the palm of your hand just like M&Ms.

—Leon C. White

Open Up Your Heart  
to Mr. Tough Guy

Somewhere in your dreams  
let my lips come close to you.  
Though they are only dreams  
someday they may all come true.  
Is it so much to ask for such a tiny part?  
Won't you find a place for me  
somewhere in your hear?

—Peanut

Two Two

Blue, blue, as a shoe  
Not me, I'm high, high in the sky  
I belong on the ground  
My feet bottoms are flat, not round  
Fly, fly way up in the sky  
So high, I could never die, die  
Bury, bury deep into the ground  
If my feet weren't square  
They would be round, and I wouldn't be  
Underground

—Stephanie Lammi



## A Death to Live

by  
Frank Rice

I had just sat down to start studying for an A&P exam when the phone rang. "Hello?"

"Hi Frank, this is your mother," her voice, weak and trembling.

"What's going on?" but she didn't answer, just silence.

"Frank, you need to come home Amanda is dying."

"Where is Tricia?"

"We're all over at her apartment and the pastor just got here."

"Let me talk to Tricia."

As I waited for what seemed forever, I started thinking of how I could not afford a plane ticket to New York, not to mention I had a tough exam coming up. What the hell am I going to do?! I certainly have to tell my sister when she gets on the phone that I'm coming to be with her.

"Hi," her voice was numb and without feeling. "When are you comin'? The doctor says Amanda won't make it through the night, she's been in a coma for a couple of hours."

"I'm going to try to leave here tonight, are Wendy and Dale there yet?"

"Yes, everyone is in Amanda's room crying, I need you to come Frank, someone who doesn't cry so much... so I can talk. Everyone is givin' mom pity, like it was her daughter or something.

"I'm sorry Tricia, I'll get there as soon as I can. I want to talk to Amanda. If you put the phone to her ear, do you think she could hear me?"

"Yes, the doctor said she can hear us... Amanda... it's Uncle Frank... go ahead and talk to her."

"Hi Amanda, it's Uncle Frank, wish I could be there... I love you... I'll come as soon as I can... bye."

After I got off the phone all I could think of was how much I hated my mother. I felt like she had been waiting for this moment for a long time, just for some twisted self pity. I wanted to think about Amanda dying but I couldn't. Three hours later, Amanda died in her mothers arms, my little sisters arms.

On the plane all I could think about was how I might pretend to really care. Just to show some emotion would be an amazing event for me. Our family hasn't been together all at once since we were all kids, we all seemed to scatter as soon as we were able to leave the house. It was a rare occasion just to call a sibling, let alone our parents, now because someone died we were all forced into this uncomfortable situation.

When I arrived at the terminal I was greeted by my parents, a normal greeting, nothing extra, which I didn't mind at all. On the to their house, we only talked of mundane things like school and work. I still didn't feel any overwhelming emotions about my nieces death. I think I wanted to though. When we arrived at the house I was informed by my mother that I would have to sleep on the floor in the living room because my relatives were staying in my old room. "Yeah right!... I'll just sleep out in the trailer." What I was really thinking. "You couldn't pay me to stay in your house. you bitch!"

I told Dale to finish his cigarette so we could go in. He flicked it from his fingers towards the parking curb, sending the hot ambers everywhere. I also flicked mine. But, I flicked it in front of me so I could stamp it out as I walked by it. I really didn't want to go in. but I had to do this for my sister Tricia. She needed me in there. We were family, so we could go in the back way. We were family, so we could go in the back way. This might make it easier I thought. As we walked up the long ramp at the back door, Dale passed me and opened the door for me. He just didn't want to go in first. I walked in anyway because I was the oldest.

I had never been to a funeral home before, it was so quiet and serene, almost Holy. I was real happy that nobody was at the door to greet me and Dale. Dale asked me, "What are we supposed to do now?"

"I guess we go into that other room where Tricia is." I knew we were just both stalling, trying not to face



the inevitable.

Craig walked in from the adjoining room with his eyes to the floor. His eyes were bloodshot and moist as he looked up at us. Twelve years had passed since the three of us had been in a room together. It didn't seem like we were even brothers so much time had passed.

"Who's in the room Craig?"

"Dad and Mom... Wendy and Tricia."

"How they doin'?"

Craig just looked at me oddly and shrugged his shoulders.

Dale and Craig walked stiffly to the other room while I just stood there frozen. I just couldn't go in there right now. I felt an unfamiliar pain welling up inside me every time I would look at the door to that room. After about five minutes, Wendy, Craig, and Dale walked out of the room with tears in their eyes and the sounds of uncontrolled sobbing coming from their chests. I didn't like that sound, it makes me angry to hear it. The scene brought back memories of all the abuse that we went through growing up. The long nights of beatings and the sounds of crying. We all cried a lot then... we all still hate our mother.

Finally, I got the courage to walk into the room. Soft music was playing which struck me as odd for a moment. Tricia was kneeling next to her little girl's casket, moaning. As I watched her grieving, our mother walked up to me, reaching out to hug me. I quickly sidestepped to shake my uncle's hand. Thank God he was there to receive it! Still, I did not cry.

OK, I can handle this, no sweat. I'm in the room... in control of my emotions... cool.

Tricia looked over at me, I could see in her eyes she was looking for something that was apparently missing. I knew exactly what she was searching for, but I hadn't cried in so many years. I took a silent vow not to after I left my parents house. I knew she needed me to cry. She came over to where I was standing and took my hand. She led me to the casket and showed me her little girl lying there so peacefully.

As I looked at Amanda's body lying there, so still, I could feel something trembling inside my gut. I looked at that little girl's face and could see my own daughter's face. I could not hold back anymore. I let out a wrenching cry and pulled it back in for a moment but soon lost control totally. I knelt there for long time and just cried my heart out. It kinda felt good. I felt human.





A few years back, all the animals went away.

We woke up one morning, and they had just disappeared. They didn't even leave us a note, or say good-bye. We never figured out quite where they had gone to.

Did we miss them? I think we did. Yes, I am almost certain we did.

Some of us thought that this was the end of the world, that we were all going to die now. But it wasn't and we didn't. There just weren't anymore animals. No cats or rabbits, no dogs or whales, no fish in the seas, no birds in the skies.

We were all alone, then.

We didn't exactly know what to do.

We wandered around lost for quite some time, and then someone pointed out that just because there were no more animals anymore, doesn't mean we have to change our lives. No reason we have to change our diets, or to cease testing products that might cause us harm.

After all, we still had the babies.

And we used them.

Some of them, as disgusting as this sounds, we ate. But, it was very delicious. Baby flesh is tender, and succulent. We flayed their skin, and decorated ourselves in it. Baby leather is soft, and very comfortable.

Some of the babies we tested.

We taped open their eyes, dripped detergents and shampoos in, one single drop at a time.

We scarred them, and scolded them. We burnt them. We clamped them and planted electrodes into their brains. We grafted, and we froze, and we irradiated them.

The babies breathed our smoke, and the babies' veins flowed with our medicines and our drugs, until they stopped breathing, or until their blood stopped flowing in their small bodies.

It was hard, of course, but it was a necessity. No one could deny that.

With the animals gone, what else could we do?

Some people complained, of course. But then again, they always do, don't they.

And everything went back to normal after that.

Only...

Yesterday, all the babies had disappeared. Gone into the night.

We don't know where they went. We didn't even see them go. We don't know what we are going to do now without them.

-- Sean Flynn





Last night I dreamed I was a machine, and you were there but you forgot to turn me on. You seemed happy, and you were driving a bus with a canary on your shoulder, and a monkey on your back.

I tried to talk to you, but I was just a machine, and I was not even turned on, so I changed into a child and ran to catch you.

I almost caught up to you, but the mannequins with no hair appeared and frightened me so much that I could not even move, or yell for help, or yell to you.

Luckily, the mannequins with no hair had to go kill Santa Clause, so they left me alone. At this point I tried to catch up to you but I couldn't even see you because you were so far ahead.

So I turned into everything, and suddenly there I was... Everywhere. I had so much to do I figured I would sit and rest first, but that was a mistake because the mannequins with no hair returned, and found me sitting, very vulnerable. And once again I got scared and ran.

The mannequins with no hair had a sack they carried with them when they were chasing me. I was tired and they knew they had me beat. I looked down to notice that I was now running on a block of ice that had broken off from the rest of the shore, and I along with the mannequins with no hair were drifting out to sea. I looked down and noticed we were not alone. With us was a penguin. A magic penguin.

When the mannequins with no hair saw they had me trapped; they laughed, and pulled out of their sack a severed head. I assume they did this to show me what they were going to do to me as well. I looked closer and noticed that this was no ordinary head, but the head of the jolly one himself, only now obviously he was not so jolly. Santa's severed head was staring at me, eyes bulged, skin now turning a deeper shade of green, veins hanging from a bloodied stump of a neck, and blood gushing out of his plump head. Suddenly, I knew I had to do something to stop these insane mannequins with no hair.

So, I looked down at the magic penguin and asked for his help. He looked up at me and replied, "Why the hell are you asking me? I'm not even magic, I just pretend to be so I can get laid, the chicks seem to dig my little magicians hat and my magic wand."

The mannequins with no hair along with Santa's severed head came closer, and I thought I was done. I then heard the voice of the fake magic penguin, and he said, "Hey, wait a second, did you forget you were everything, and everywhere, I bet you did."

He was right, I did. So, being everything, I reversed what had been done and the mannequins with no hair went back to their store window at Sears. And Santa got his head back, and he was so happy to have his head back he gave me a canned ham.

I also remembered I was everywhere, so I returned to where you were, and when I got there I was waiting for you to speak, and when you finally opened your mouth to breath your words to me, I was saddened to realize I had woken up.

—Eric Resnik

## My Apocalyptic Dream

I can't see the buildings and I can't see the trees. While all the people dissolve under the brilliant light, and this is my apocalyptic dream. I walk alone through the long trails of nothingness, Deafened by the loud, annoying sound of silence. No laughing, No crying, No living, Just dying. The dead lie just as they fell, outstretched arms and a silent scream locked into their skeletons. The terror of the mushroom cloud that seared off their flesh apparent throughout the dead. I walk through the ravage streets of civilization with tears running down my cheeks. And this is my apocalyptic dream.

—Andy Couture



## A Lost Soul

by:

Scott Hartwell

He wakes from his drunken stupor. Where am I he wonders? He sees a small, abandoned log cabin directly in front of him. He walks through the front door, into a small room. The room is very dark. There is just enough light, coming from the fireplace to see. He looks at the wall behind him, books, more books than you could read in a lifetime. There is a red velvet chair in front of the fireplace. He takes off his beaten jacket and places it on the chair. He notices an old book on the chair. There is no title on the cover. He opens the book, it is filled with empty pages. He sits in the chair and lights his cigar. He sits for a while, trying to figure out where he is. Then it hits him, who started the fire? He begins to look around for clues. He turns around and sees a passage way he must have overlooked. The passage way is covered by a curtain. He goes to the passage way, "Maybe I should leave?" he says out loud. Something inside forces him to go further. He throws back the curtain and a deep chill flows through his body. He looks behind him, the passage does not exist. He now stands in the middle of a hallway. The walls, the floor, and the ceiling are all white. He takes a puff of his cigar, puzzled, what next? He does not know which way to go. He fears he will choose the wrong way. He decides to walk in the direction he is facing, and not stop until the end. He walks for what seems like hours. No progress made, white still surrounds him.

He has no idea what he is looking for, but he knows he cannot stop. He is now puffing his cigar regularly. He starts feeling very strange and begins to shake. He feels a warm breeze from behind him. He turns around and immediately falls to his knees. He is paralyzed by the figure that stands before him. What he feels is all the pain he has caused. What he sees is his image. His body without a soul. The cigar hits the floor and stops burning.

The End

—Scott Hartwell



"Sky's the Limit"

I sit here alone in the world,  
as it seems to me.  
The peaceful life above.  
The dusk of reality setting in around.  
My own thoughts miles away  
dreams soaring in the clouds.  
I wonder how I'll ever come back down.  
But it's so much nicer there  
feeling the sunshine-  
the wind upon my cheeks  
as I try to find my own place  
in this world.  
My eyes full of hope  
transparent as the bright blue sky  
scatterings of clouds, of fears, of doubts  
but always looking onward  
even into the darkness reality may bring.

—Justine Giardiello



My Field of Flowers

I lay here thinking,  
thinking of what to write.  
Writing,  
Whatever pops up in my head,  
saying,  
Whatever I'm thinking,  
dreaming,  
of a beautiful field of flowers,  
wishing,  
I was part of them.  
But in reality,  
I am.  
I see the flowers growing,  
as so am I.  
I see them being nurtured,  
by the bigger, stronger flowers,  
as so am I.  
But in a different way,  
I'm learning,  
learning of the past and seeing,  
seeing what the future has in store,  
finding out,  
it's whatever I dream.

—Angela Carpenter

Sounds Under the Big Top

Here horses can dance  
Men make fierce lions prance  
People try to make strangers laugh  
A guy in a cape can cut a woman in half  
Magic weavers make us gasp in fear  
Anything could happen here

A man in a tux with tails takes center stage  
His voice seems filled with an uncertain rage  
I listen to him tell of impending doom  
A sudden silence fills the room  
Eerie music begins to play  
He shares the things we all need to say

He talks of legendary journeys, saints and sinners,  
red sport cars in the slow lane, lazy turtles on logs,  
Jummy Buffet, disco balls, the mystery behind polyester,  
and singing telegrams

He sings about pelicans guarding empty bays, rocking chairs  
that creak the stories of generations, tree houses, the dark side  
of the moon, dream catchers and gargoyles

He cries tales of Stanley, Blanche, and Stella, letters written  
but never sent, waking up in someone else's dream, empty  
wine bottles and David Bowie's ever changing self

He tells of these and more but I am the only one who hears  
The rest around me only listen to the sounds of the circus  
No one else is listening  
These faint whispers often fall on deaf ears

—Katie Sullivan

GENTLEST OF ALL TIMES SHAPES

I'VE BEEN PLANTED SINCE BIBLICAL TIMES  
SOFT, WHITE  
WOVEN FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE  
LIKE THE SPIDER'S THREAD  
MY FIBER CLOSES GAPS  
CULTIVATED, WARM  
HANGING IN THE BREEZE  
DOWNY, ATTACHED TO MY SEEDS  
GENTLEST OF ALL TIMES SHAPES  
COTTON.

—Margail L. Streeter





Angels believe the eyes are the windows to the soul.

Looking-Glass Self  
by  
Rich Hennemann

The day was calm, a nice day for a walk. Up here on the cliffs the sun was always generous, forever illuminating all it could touch. However, today the leaves had begun to fall, together, lying vacant on the grass. All that remained when the gentlemen arrived was a torn piece of clothing and evidence of a struggle. Or perhaps an accident. The remains would eventually tell the men a story of what was, in their eyes, the hero and the helpless. What had happened just minutes before was a predicament deemed by mortal men as being the fault of uneven ground, faulty terrain, unforgiving rock, or just simple human error. A slip, fall, and then a courageous attempt at heroism, but sadly, a failed attempt.

Earlier this day these cliffs played host to a young couple. A couple with a purpose, but in need of direction. The man carried with him, as he had for so long, the burden of his silence, and hopes of its release today. But still he was silent, a poet without words. They continued on, the man still distant, his love too close to the edge.

As he lifted his head to speak, fate stepped in. In an instant, with the strength of a thousand men and the tears of a thousand eyes, he held his love, helpless, over the void. His thoughts of saying good-bye escaped him, yet he seemed to make no attempt to lift her. He just stared. Peering through the white glass windows he saw a beautiful child crying in the wind. The breeze was warm, but the child's tears were cold. At last, he saw the love that he had needed to see for so long, that he had searched for always. Love, real love. The kind that takes no effort to achieve, from either side. Beautiful, magic, love. Not the kind that dies, the kind that kills you. Then almost immediately he realized the child was not crying for him. This instant loss of meaning, of feeling, caused a momentary lapse of reason.

As his grip loosened, she closed her eyes.

Alone now. The wind turned cold, and he could no longer see the child, but somewhere he could still hear the crying. Finally broken, the hero without the helpless retracted his hand and stood up to walk away. As he turned, the frozen wind attacked his face. It was his name that hit him. He opened his eyes and again he saw the child, without tears, peering into him. And again he saw this love, helpless, love. The kind that takes no effort to achieve. Beautiful, magic, love. Not the kind that dies, the kind that kills you. The child extended a hand, and gave back life to this tired machine, brought back to this man his meaning, his feeling. But, he still hadn't said good-bye. It began to rain, through the windows, as the man had carelessly left them open.

As he stepped to the edge, he closed his eyes.

listen to my broken heart  
listen to the songs of death  
sirens call  
from an  
island unseen

and there is no pain there  
and there is no death there  
because death holds no fear  
for someone this alone  
where has she gone  
and what will heal my soul  
this is the living death

there  
is  
no  
escape...

---

i climb the stairs to the bridge  
my overcoat hangs lifeless and dull  
even with wind whipping my hair  
away from my face

i walk out toward the high point  
staring at the black liquid death  
hundreds of feet below  
and remember  
even though i don't want to - -  
and anguish crashes into my awareness

three days ago, she left  
no warning beforehand  
not even a 'dear john' letter afterward  
just -- gone  
i got home  
her things were cleaned out of my closet  
an hour ago  
the phone rang  
it woke me up  
before i got to it  
the machine picked up

it was her  
she said  
phil, don't pick up  
i don't want to hear your voice  
i couldn't handle it right now--  
i just had to tell you  
i'm happy where i am  
and...  
i'm sorry  
then a click  
she was gone  
apparently forever  
so here i find myself  
staring into cold nothing  
i climb the guardrail  
and let go

who knew my overcoat  
would slow my fall so much  
i tumble through space  
it seems like forever  
cliche i know  
but it's true  
the ice broke under me  
how did i hit near the shore  
i jumped from the middle

please god  
don't let anyone find me here  
i want to die tonight

the lights up there--  
rescuers or dawn?  
spotlights  
damn  
i have to get hidden  
i slide deeper into the water  
too late  
yells faint from above  
too late for them, too  
i'm already gone

i  
have  
escaped...





## Spellbound

Have you ever met anyone who was a great storyteller? One who could talk for hours telling tales of adventure, of fun or fights or frolicking? Tales that made you laugh, or weep, or simply left you spellbound? Well, one glorious day I met such a person. Let me tell you about him...

I was about twelve years old at the time and living with my grandparents on a small dairy farm in Vermont. One Saturday morning, I overheard them talking about going to the woods to search for mushrooms. After a long discussion they decided they couldn't go until the following week. Hoping to surprise them, I decided to look for some by myself.

It was in the fall of the year. The woods were aflame with brilliant colors from the autumn leaves. I had found an opening underneath some beech trees where the umbrella heads of the mushrooms almost covered the ground. There were white ones, brown ones, and some that were a deep pink. I picked as fast as I could and visualized the happy smiles on my grandparent's faces when I returned.

The first time I realized that I was not alone was when I heard someone whistling. Looking up in surprise I saw a man standing nearby. He smiled, a big warm smile, then came walking toward me. He had strange looking clothes, but something told me I had just met a new friend. Someone very special! He asked me if I liked mushrooms. I said, "Yes," but I was picking them for the first time as a surprise for my grandparents. He then asked if I liked stories. I replied, "I sure do!"

Now I can't remember or tell you all the stories he told me that day, but it was late afternoon when he finally stood up from the tree stump where he had been sitting, knocked the ashes out of his pipe and said he had to leave. However, he wanted to tell me one last story. It was about a man who left his farm one day to go hunting in the Catskill Mountains in New York. Well, it seems he ate his dinner up there, then crawled into a cave and fell asleep for twenty years. When my new friend finished speaking, he did a strange thing. Reaching into my pail of mushrooms, he searched among them and held up three of them. Then he told me to examine them very, very closely. "If you ever eat anyone of these," he warned, "you would either fall asleep forever or, if you were lucky, for twenty years. As he turned to go he said, "What's your name boy?"

"Dougie Quinn," I replied.

He shook my hand and said, "They call me Rip. That's short for Rip Van Winkle. I come back every twenty years to tell my story." He smiled and walked away, whistling merrily.

P.S. I later discovered that the initials R.I.P. mean Rest in Peace!

—Doug Quinn



## Is Anything Better than the Yankees?

For as long as I could remember, I watched the New York Yankees. I was only ten years old the last time that they won a world series. I've waited for so many years and tonight they finally did it. I have never in my entire life missed a world series, and I couldn't really understand why the very team I've been waiting to see, for so many years, on this night was meaningless. I missed the first seven innings. I guess the game didn't really matter because all I ever wanted was to be by your side. As I sat with you near the living room, I could hear the fans shouting. I just knew they were having a ball, but just being with you, watching you hit the keyboard to help me win the game was even more exciting. After each and every great play, your stepfather walked in the room and told me what had happened but I think he was being more than just a fan. Every time I heard the crowd, I knew He was on his way and just before he walked in, I moved away. I then sat in the living room and watched the remaining part of the game. It got a little tense. A man on first and third base, two outs, one ball and two strikes, an suddenly a pop fly. I knew it was all over. I wanted to hug someone but you were the only one by my side and I didn't want you to think I was crazy. It's only been a few weeks and so I asked, "Can I kiss you?" I'm glad I did.

—Eddie Vargas



Standing on a shaky platform

High above the unforgiving earth

Teetering on the edge

With my hands flailing to regain my stable balance.

And it is like a balancing act,

With those gossamer strings

Dangling from my outstretched fingers.

And there they are

Attached at the shoulders, hands, knees, and legs

Miniature human puppets

Playing my game called love.

—Devone Dumas

The Notch  
by  
Corey Lancey

With spring just around the corner and cabin fever at it's highest peak my thoughts turn to the mountains. Grafton Notch State Park in Maine to be more precise. I lived in Bethel, ME for two years. Bethel is a very small town in the southwestern part of the state. Its only claim to fame is that it's the only "real" town at the base of Sunday River Ski & Mountain Bike Resort. Well, the next town headin' north is Newry. Newry is by far the tiniest town I have ever seen in my life. "Down town" Newry consists of one building. This one building has the post office, "police room" and the general store complete with all the hunting equipment and ammunition you need.

But boy, what a town to get back in touch with nature in! You see, 90% of Newry is untouched mountains! If mountain biking isn't your style there are lots of trails that have been groomed by the Jeep Jamboree's, snowmobilers, and cross country skiers. In one day you can walk a nicely groomed trail or be adventurous and blaze your own trail. You can test your strength and nerves rock climbing or leisurely cruise the Aderiscondon River in a kayak. If you ask me though, the best part about Newry is Grafton Notch State Park.

Grafton Notch was created by the glaciers of the last ice age and has remained relatively pristine to this day. If you're into loading up the back pack and heading off into the wilderness like I am, this is definitely the place to be! Being a national park it is kept up by the rangers very well. Not to mention the local folks all love the Notch and take pride in its appearance. This park is special to me because it's the perfect place for a lot of little jaunts through the forest each day. With only one road going through the whole notch there really isn't much choice to where you can drive, but the road takes you to areas where you can park and within minutes you will be totally engulfed in the magic of the land!

Spring is the most wondrous time of them all in the Notch. In the early spring, load your camera and bring an extra roll or two because the local wildlife are all about trying to get an early start at feeding after the long, hard winter. Towards the middle of April, the moose start to come out of the deep woods and come to the roads. Craving sodium, they lick the pavement that has been salted by the highway dept. over the winter.

Moose are magnificent animals that are usually very gentle, but you've got to remember that they are wild animals, and can and do have bad days too. 99.999...% of all the moose encounters you will have will be nothing short of magical. When you are walking along a trail and up ahead is a 1500lb moose your heart jumps up into your throat. Not from fear mind you, from the sheer excitement of being so close to such a large animal with a very intimidating rack of antlers, yet everything is so peaceful!!! The awkward grace of the moose will touch your soul but there are some things you must know to keep these meetings safe.

First of all, moose are VERY big animals, bulls pushing the 1800lb mark are not uncommon. Bulls are usually concerned with only one thing and that's eating, except however during the "Rut". During the rut all the bulls compete with each other for the best females to mate with. Needless to say, they are just a bit aggressive towards ANYTHING that crosses their paths. When the bulls fight amongst themselves the only thing that gets hurt badly is the losing bull's pride. That's all well and good for the moose, but with us humans, it's a whole new ball game!!! So, if you're hiking and you come across one, be careful. Second, a bull moose is like a bull cow in the aspect that it will charge at brightly colored red objects. This also includes red cars. I found that out first hand one night, so you can believe me when I tell ya. Another thing about moose and cars is that, don't think for a minute that you can scare the moose by beeping the horn and flashing the high beams at it. That only gets 'em madder than a wet hornet!



Once again, I unfortunately found that out the hard way. Luckily, the bull didn't smash my car up, but it did manage to put the fear of God in me after having to fly down the teeniest of logging roads, at 3:30 in the morning, in reverse with Mary screaming bloody murder all the way!!!

Another thing that you got to keep in mind in the spring time are the bears!! There are a lot of black bears in this area and the last thing you want to do is argue with a grumpy ol' bear just comin' out of the den. If there is one thing you take to heart after reading this, I hope it's that. Momma bears are even worse. She can sprint for short distances almost 25mph, so if she wants ya, she's gonna get ya!! In all honesty though, I would have to say that if you use your head and don't do stupid things, you will have nothing to fear from the bear.

There are three kinds of bear encounters you can have. Food related: if you are carrying food with you that isn't in a bear proof box or at least sealed air tight in a zip lock bag. The smell of the food will attract them to you and that's generally not a good thing. Surprise, some times coming around corners the bear might not notice you until you turn right in front of him. Believe it or not bears don't want to run into you accidentally either. While you are walking along, talk in your regular voice, don't whisper, that way the bear will hear you and will have a chance to move on before there's an encounter. The last one is the best one!!

Every once in a while you may be walking down a trail, with a nice breeze in your face, and up the trail a bit is a bear rummagin' around for nice or any sort of tiny morsel it can manage to stuff in its face! You don't yelp in fear, you keep your cool. Knowing that turning and running away will promote an attack you just step back and off to the side if possible. Never lose sight of the bear but don't try to stare him down either. Think of what foxes do when they run across a bear. They stop, acknowledge the bears supremacy by keeping its distance and basically goes about its business without a care. Like I said, if you use your head you'll be all set and have some good "war" stories to tell your friends when you get home.

All this talk of moose and bears and bein' in the mountains is really gettin' me itchy for the warm weather to finally come our way. Pretty soon I'll be gettin' the tent out, washin' the sleepin' bags and put some new lines on my fly rod. Gettin' everything all ready to head north and enjoy the peace and serenity of God's country once again. I just can't say it enough, if you're into the outdoors go to Grafton Notch! It's only a 4 1/2 hr ride from here, not too bad, but well worth it. By the way, there is a great little home brew pub on the way there!!! Personally, I recommend the Sunday River Alt but that my friends is a whole nuther ball game!!!!





## Dead Silence

We had been talking for over an hour. I couldn't even keep track, but definitely over an hour. And we weren't even talking *about* much, just catching up mostly (I hadn't talked to her in over six months). I could vaguely sense the feeling of absolute bliss that I used to experience every day. But, that was a long time ago. It seems like a long time, anyway. And I knew that the dreadful moment would come when she would say that she had to leave, and I knew that it was going to come soon.

Sure enough, only minutes later, it came. "Well," she said after a short pause in the conversation, "I'm gonna have to let you go." She always says that. "I have to get up for work real early tomorrow." She pauses. "But, hey, I'll talk to ya sometime," she says, almost as if she knows that I want her to stay.

And I knew that "I'll talk to ya sometime" meant yet another six or so months down the road. I knew that I could not possibly take another six months of waiting, another six months of suppressing what I really want to say. And I knew that this was my chance to let it out, no matter how hard it was, no matter how much she didn't want to hear it. I had something to say.

My heart was beating rapidly and I was breathing very heavily. I could feel the sweat on my palms. I was shaking, for Christ's sake! I inhaled my last nervous breath of air and forced the words out of my mouth, and out of my head. "Hey, before you go, I just wanted to say one more thing," I said, trying to calm myself down. "You don't have to respond to this if you don't want to," I said stupidly, giving her the option of ignoring me like usual. "I just wanted to say..." I paused for a second to let myself breath. "...that I'm sorry. I'm so *fucking* sorry."

Dead silence.

—Paul Aho



## Missing You

You're leaving me today, aren't you?

As usual, I have everybody in the whole goddamned world telling me, "It's going to be all right." There are plenty of fish in the sea. You can do better than her anyway!" They don't know me though.

You can say all that crap because it's not happening to you, because you don't even know how it feels to me. You don't know how much it hurts deep down inside to even think about it, never mind to think about her with someone else.

Now the silence of loneliness sets in as I have no one to talk to anymore. I gave up my life for you, and this is how you repay me? Thanks a lot! The frustration and anger of not knowing anything drive me crazy. Not knowing the truth of what led up to this or even why this really had to happen is very troublesome. Somehow, I overcome this struggle through and I control myself. Knowing that tomorrow will come around, angry or sad.

Oh yippee. Now the phone calls come. Why do you torture me? Must you make me miss your precious voice anymore than I already do? You talk to me as if nothing has even happened, but it has. My life has practically ended because of you, and you don't care. Leave me the hell alone. It hasn't been long enough to be talking to you like we were never anything. Like we were just friends... That's what I think and would like to say, but I can't get the courage to say it: so I just sit back and suffer.

I know that at one point she cared for me, as I cared for her too. There was no saying what I would have done for her. But all of that is gone: it's all in the past. And now, I just wish I could say "I love you."

—Travis Stickney

fear

I spoke on the phone in hushed tones, so as not to wake the sleeping.  
And from the corner moved a shape, slightly along the wall.  
Mind, access, identified, spider.  
Live, deal, it's only on the wall.  
An arachniphobe attempting to cope.  
Another movement, another look past my own focal point,  
into focus, into horror.  
On my side, as I lay, mere inches,  
lookingwatchingwondering, its legs twitch as it decides to move closer.  
One thought becometh, one feeling becomes.  
In the off blue reflection of the TV, against a black wall,  
one thought, one feeling.  
A scream, oddly subdued so as not to wake the sleeping.  
The phone clatters, the bed sheets fly.  
The dog rises ready to join in the action.  
The cat, if lying closer would have been a casualty of I escaping my confinement.  
I tell the voice on the phone, "just a minute."  
as I crouch in the well rehearsed spider stalking position in the middle of my floor,  
for I moment I believe  
he is on me!  
The legs are everywhere in my hair, along my arms causing its goose bumps  
through my legs and beneath my skin.  
I look closer at the bed.  
Unstartled by the earthquake it has just caused, again the legs wiggle  
as it sits on my pillow.  
Instinct, kill!  
The nearest weapon, my precalculus book.  
With the cunning of a hunter, my eyes narrow, head poised at a slight angle...  
I drop the book!  
Miscalculation, all properties weren't taken into consideration!  
Hard against soft! The book bounces.  
No force is wrought behind the attack.  
A slight word to the voice on the phone and "just another minute."  
Pressure on the book.  
Then realizing I don't really want to sleep in dead spider.  
All the lights have been turned, the floor still holds me.  
Someone weary and woken peers into my room with squinting eyes.  
"What's all the banging?"  
I explain.  
"Well, just stop the banging."  
I still crouch feeling the thrill of the hunt and knowing victory even as legs still bombard my senses.  
Meekly, I turn the book over... nothing, nothing, nothing.  
My eyes deceive me.  
No remnants, no goo, nothing.  
Knowing that touch would surely kill me more than any real poison, I snatch a pencil



and slowly begin to move blankets, pillows sheets, nothing.  
I was not asleep, as I have the voice on the phone still worried about my distress.  
I was/am awake.  
Hallucination, like so many others? Overactive thoughts.  
He I saw, he I killed.  
Ghost to the heavens, leaving no physical body, just one last joust at my trembling heart.  
The hair falling into my eyes causes a start and quick relief.  
The voice bids well and night and I look at the bed, at the ceiling,  
knowing it's happened before.  
And I look  
and I see  
nothing...

Allyson

### To Love Again

Vanishing sights of tear-filled kleenex  
no more nose freezing nights  
scarce heartaches, plentiful kisses  
warmth like the pulsating heat of the sun  
hugs so strong as to bulge your eyes  
dreams of bliss and fields of daisies  
prancing and dancing  
frolicking and tumbling  
collecting the dew that sleeps  
upon the soft grass

—E.J. Langelier



*the pain inside*

*a shadow sits upon her heart  
from days gone by and things not  
said  
she sits upon her bed and cries  
for all those memories  
she should have left behind  
she wonders why and how and  
when  
what happened?  
what went wrong?  
where did she fail?  
or could it be it was not she  
who made the mistake along the  
way  
maybe she was only  
the victim of circumstance  
and now she must pick up the  
pieces  
start over again  
to gain back her confidence  
but after awhile  
when the memories fade  
and she forgets the pain  
she sometimes dreams  
she can go back  
to yesterday  
to the way things use to be  
but when reminded  
she is forced to move on*

*and realize  
that the only mistake made  
was on her part  
by failing to be herself  
by hiding her true identity  
to please the crowd  
and tell them  
what they wanted to hear  
and nobody ever listened to her  
when she tried to reveal  
the pain inside  
that was eating her up  
piece by piece  
day by day she goes forward  
one step at a time  
pushing the pain aside  
she feels deserted  
left alone and asks herself  
"does anyone care?"  
but all at once  
it dawns on her  
that all that matters  
is how she reacts  
to the everyday circumstances  
that are forced upon her  
she knows she has choices  
to make one day  
when will she know for sure  
the answers to all her questions  
maybe never  
but now it doesn't matter anymore  
'cause she is happy  
she's let go of the pain  
ready to move on to another  
brighter day*

*Sarah Elizabeth Breen*

## Better Things

by  
Ben Fagan

"What's up Mike? You wanna come see the new Keyboard I got?" I asked, remembering how he had mentioned that he wanted to yesterday.

"No." He replied in a bland voice.

"Why not?" I asked keeping in mind how he wanted to see it.

"I wanted to sleep, I'm doing something tomorrow."

"What?"

"Practicing with my band."

My friend Mike had recently got a hard-core band together in his hometown of Springfield. I live in Mayberry which is about twenty minutes away, at least by the way I drive. My speedometers broken but I figured out the average speed by keeping up with most of the other cars on the highway. I figure that's when it reads forty-five. My mom was following me home one day and she said I drive about seventy five miles per hour. My mom's owned an antique shop in the center of town since 1995. She doesn't make to much money at the shop but she is always happy to give me as much money as she can. I've always loved my mother even when we had no money at all and lived off the land and welfare in Adamborrow, about another ten minutes away from Mayberry.

I've visited Mike as much as I could since I got my license and my dad's bosses car. The car, a 1990 Ford something, was in exchange for my dad's '94 Lumina mini van. The van was supposed to be my dad's raise but his bosses daughter wanted it, so he repossessed it in exchange for this slightly down, broken blinker, occasionally stalling vehicle. This goes to show what kind of assholes my father works for and what kind of grouchy wreck he is. Our house is pretty run down too. It hasn't been repainted probably since it's original paint job in the thirties, so the paint is all cracked and peeling off. Most of the inside is still the same too, besides the few rooms we've repainted and have left frozen in being repainted since '94.

We own a few nice things despite our laziness. A forty something inch TV, a new truck, a new computer, and I try to say I own my stuff. In my room lies, my old keyboard, one of the only presents my dad's bought me, which I still play occasionally. My 30 something inch TV, My Adcom Dolby Prologic Surround Sound hi-fi system with hundred disc CD changer, tape deck, Cerwin-Vega speakers and the new aforementioned Kurzweil workstation. If it's possible to love material things I would say I love them all. Above all other feelings about these things that I own I feel appreciation the most. Since I was 16 I didn't have a thing that I could call my own. I did have a couple skateboards, clothes and books, but I used to scratch Fat Boys records on my Fisher-Price turntable until I was thirteen and called it 'the bomb' for Christ sakes. Appreciation, that's what I thought the talk on the way home was going to be about but let's not jump the gun.

I've known Mike for a few years now and I use to always have a lot of fun with him. We'd go skateboarding every day and to the mall. We'd just hang out and have lots of laughs. I always used to think Mike was cool. One day His ex-girlfriend told me that when Mike first met me he said I was the coolest kid because I had everything that he didn't. Mike truly doesn't have what I do. Before I moved to my house, and my mom started to get a lot of money with which she bought me these great birthday and Christmas presents with, I had less than Mike and exactly the same. The only things that Mike didn't have that I had was a mother that loved him. His real father loved him but supposedly his mother didn't. His step father was just like my real father.



My father used to come home every night drunk as a fish. He'd yell, scream, and occasionally slap my beloved mother. I love my mother more than anything else on earth and you might want to imagine how I felt, but I'll explain it to you anyhow. "I can't fucking believe you blah blah blah blah blaah... SLAP ... (sobbing from my mother, whom I would give my life for infinity times)... SLAM ... VROOOM... sigh but I cry as I feel my cheek, full of a stinging pain. My stomach aches with pain as I lay, curled in my bed, with tears rolling down my cheeks and my face tight in anger and hatred for my father... plots of murder racing through my mind... .. but so young... and weak ... and Mike says I don't understand him... ppphh ha! I've been hit by my drunk father too, and yours wasn't your real father... .. not to say, "I'm better than you" you fuckin' jerk.

So... "Practicing with my band... and my back still hurts.. all right sure as long as I'm back by ten."

"All right, I'll come pick you up."....."Click."

I get my jacket on, my hat, shoes and I'm out the door. On the way back to my house we talk about Mike's ex-girlfriend, whom we picked up the night before, and listened to some hip-hop tape Mike thought I would like. I liked the tape but something just wasn't linking between us. We got to my house and went up to my room. I flipped on the amp and turned on my synth. I started playing some music for him and he kept touching the keys at the top, like a little kid. I asked him to stop; he didn't know where the notes and sounds were and it was just annoying. I don't know if he thinks he's good or not but there are certain basic things about music that he knows nothing about. The first thing he doesn't know is keeping time. He listens to music but doesn't feel music. I visualize notes as they float through the air. I'm not bragging, and I'm certainly not saying, "I'm the greatest musician in the world," but everybody that listens to my music says it's good. I practice for at least three hours a day. I love almost all music and I love making it just the same. I listen to many different types of music but Mike can never admit that he doesn't know something, and trying to explain different music is a pointless task with him.

A few minutes after I was showing him around my keyboard and what it could do he acted like he wanted to leave. I was getting frustrated because he wouldn't even listen to the keyboard; he was just fucking around with it, and thought he was cool.

"Did you want to leave?"

"Sure let's go." he said. We walked down the stairs, through the front door and over to my car in the driveway.

"What a waste of time." I said. I got in the car and unlocked the door for Mike. "I thought you wanted to see my keyboard?" I said.

"I have better things to do than sit around and play my keyboard all day." he said in a slightly mocking tone.

"What the fuck are you talking about?" What a fucking jealous prick.

That was the beginning of an argument about why he said that to me, I knew why. I just didn't want to call him jealous. I know Mike has next to nothing, like I used to but he has more, and I have a lot of material possessions but I also have a lot of knowledge when it come to psychology, from working out my own problems. As long as I've known this kid he's been going through the same problems I've gone through years before. I've tried to mention this to him but he just says, "So, you're better than me?" God.. this frustration.. Mike went on to work in the past arguments about how I told him he didn't like my music so he was stupid, I never said this. Here's a reenactment of that argument, "Look putting down the music that I like to listen to by saying it's stupid and it doesn't make sense, is like me saying I don't like hard - core music!" I loved funk and he loved



hard-core. I thought hard-core was cool, and I still do, "That's stupid... you don't know anything about hard-core music..." Mike thinks he knows everything about hard-core music, "That's what I'm saying. That's exactly what I'm saying..." You have to explain everything to this hard skulled.. whatever..

"Go ahead, say it. I know just what you're going to say." Mike said as he looks away smiling, like he knows something's ridiculous. He thinks he knows what people think or some shit.

"What... what the fuck was I going to say? I wasn't gonna say shit."

"You were going to say how I'm stupid because I don't like your music." in an even more mocking tone.

"You're an idiot, you know that? You see I've traveled all around this country and I've gotten more cultured than, say, someone who just stays in Mayberry his whole life because I've seen how people live here and understand that it's good because that's where there from and doing their own shit.." Mike always says how he's better than every one. He thinks he's better than everyone in Mayberry because he lives in Adamborrow now and that's a bigger city. I used to go to New York at least every month and Adamborrow's pretty damn small.

"...It's the same with music." this brilliant insight, if I do say so myself, flew right over this kids head.

On my way home I reflected our argument with these following thoughts. This talk wasn't just an argument it was the end of our friendship. The kids so damn thick skulled it makes me sick. He's always talking about how he understands all hip-hop and everything but the kid doesn't know shit. I listened to a hip-hop song on the radio which could have been written about him. The artist said jealousies not a friend to him it's more like an enemy and how he realized he had to pull himself out of his junk way of life and thinking, which his friends were all encouraging. He said he had to leave these friends who were keeping him down so he could climb with his music, and life and family. He explained how he felt just like I did. He was open minded and didn't think others should be so close minded and one tracked in these ways that are taking them nowhere. I've tried to expand Mike's mind for two years now, but I don't see any way for him to get out since he doesn't see anyway. He doesn't want to change his close mindedness even about music and I'm damn sure he's not going to stop painting on walls. He told me he has better thing to do than play his keyboard all day, but that's shit. Better things...

*dreams flowing in the mind  
open your imagination  
they take you where you want to go  
where you've never been  
there is room for mistakes*

*~Amy Gebru*



*Phasing the Old Life Away*

*A phase is coming.  
A new part to the same life.  
The way I think,  
The way I express.  
The way I feel.  
Expelling the unnecessary.  
No time for petty things or people.  
So many feelings.  
Good feelings one minute.  
Horrible feelings the next.  
New decisions made.  
Old ways discarded without a second thought.  
So many people, such confusion.  
New experiences that never would have been considered  
before.  
Is it healthier or damaging?  
Extending my outlook, or losing some morals.  
Sexually expressing oneself.  
Sensually healing myself and another.  
Old standards and new standards, is there an in-between?  
Wishing to be completely alone.  
Never wanting to be alone ever again.  
Never to be stifled again.  
Wanting to share, to grow closer, to mature with you.  
Never getting old, just growing in a new phase together, or  
maybe it's better to go through it with just myself and my  
conflicts, idea's, morals indecisiveness, and confusions.  
Physically changing, but into What?  
Chemical, or hormonal, attitude or way of life.  
Plans made, past abandoned.  
Moving on into the phase.  
Reborn into the second phase of my life with a different  
outlook,*

*~Robin G.*





## The Hunt

Fear hurried through the forest, stumbling as she went, looking over her shoulder with every other footfall. The Darkness of the sky above pushed her on that much faster, and the Cold in the air was making the iron sheath of her rapier and naked flesh numb with Indifference. She wanted to discard it, the rapier that is, but could not. It was all she had if she could not escape the monstrosity that followed her.

The Damp of the cold forest floor chilled her bare feet as she trotted ahead, choosing her path with some haste, checking her trail once again. The forest was grey and lifeless, she could not remember the last time she saw a wild creature. In their absence, the only sound was her shallow, labored breathing, and that was none too comforting.

Noticing that her pace had slowed to a walk, Fear looked toward the sky for the sun. Perhaps, something to warm her body, but it was not there. Concealed by dark clouds controlled by her pursuer. OH, GOD! She is not putting distance between them! A glance back!

She slammed up against him, her head whipping back to front as she rebounded off him and landed in the wet, grey leaves on her behind. Destruction laughed an evil laugh, and bared rows of jagged yellow teeth in a sick, twisted grin. Acknowledgment that he had once again outsmarted his quarry. Fear could not find the air in her lungs to cry for help or might, and clenched her rapier ever tighter. *Should she attack?*

LORD! And do what to *that...* that thing?! Her minor weapon would do well to penetrate but one layer of that beasts armor.

Destruction raised he espondon, and clenched his fist, licking his lips as he surveyed her from head to toe. Fear quivered in anticipation of what he could do to her before he disposed of her.

Her eyes trailed down his Horrendous mass of muscle and bulk, and between his tree-trunk legs, she saw two figures emerging from the wood. The first was Hope, and the second, one of her champions, Courage. He had drawn his claymore during his advance, and the blade gleamed in the light of the recently revealed Sun.

She decided to draw her rapier after all.



### I Believe

I believe in walking after dark... standing up for what you believe in... that a man should be honest... a man should stand up for himself... a man should be willing to help anyone in need of it... a man shouldn't fight unless absolutely necessary... every man should treat all woman as special... a man should be true to himself... never lie... be willing to give his life so that another may live... a man is only as good as his word... reserving a special place in one's own heart... not judging other people... that there are lots of men but far fewer are considered to be a man...

~Gary J. Hastings



*I've got a drawer full of  
Happy Memories  
gone stale*

*Happy memories  
only seem to  
make me sad*

*Because what good is  
a memory  
if it cannot be  
relived?*

*I could never clean out  
my drawer  
because of what the contents  
meant*

*And cleaning my  
drawer would take away  
all that they mean  
now*

*Maybe I don't  
want to clean  
my drawer*

*Maybe I want  
to keep filling it  
until it overflows*

*And maybe that  
just  
can't  
happen*

*So I guess  
I'll just have to  
close the drawer  
walk away  
and find fresh memories*

*But you can't  
look for a memory  
because they are the past*

*And it's time I look for a future  
While keeping my memories safe  
in my drawer*

### Untitled

*"27 curls," my grandma said.  
At seven had upon her head.  
Her mother brushed them smooth, everyday,  
Around her finger, so's to stay  
'Through lessons learned and random play  
'Tidy springing spirals, 'They  
Once on little shoulders lay.  
Now in a box beside the bed.*

*It is not now the final dawn  
For these small spirits, not going, or gone  
Or rushing to a peaceful grave.  
They find the backward thoughts they crave  
And not only through curls we save,  
But in each dark and curling wave,  
'That to my mother, Grandma gave,  
The hidden curls, they do live on.*

*a.k.a. Joe Haley*

*~Joseph Patrick Haley*

*A tall thin woman  
with curly black hair  
walked into my garden  
and spat on the stair  
She looked up at me  
and asked if I had  
done anything lately  
to make my wife sad  
As she drank from her bottle  
I thought back on the day  
my good wife had found me  
with her friend in the hay  
I looked at this drunk woman  
looked straight in her eye  
I saw her tears forming  
I let out my lie,*

*"I should never do aught to make my love cry,  
She's so very happy. What right do you pry?"*

*"I am the Angel of Justice for Love, and I have been watching  
this farce from above. She married believing you loved in good faith.  
But your lying and cheating breeds nothing but hate."*

*The day my wife found me  
I laughed in her face  
She was never in bed  
so her friend took her place  
The truth is I love her  
though I cannot deny  
I'll never be faithful  
I would rather die*

*The Angel, disgusted, plucked out one black hair  
and laid it on my face  
I now felt despair*

*"A price you shall pay for the lies in your bed.  
Go back to your cottage. You'll find your wife dead."*

*~Robin N. Tinker*



### On the Far

*Don't ever...*

*EVER!!*

*Think you can cheat love,  
by caging her with distance.*

*She won't stay captured  
and you can't control her.*

*If you caged her to use her,  
only when you wanted to,  
she will not see your point of view,  
and will be upset.*

*Love knows no boundaries.  
Don't think you can hold her.  
Fool.*

*~ The Smiling Bandit  
{strikes again!--Ha, Ha, Ha!}*







AML



